

Hayground Windmill
Inc. Village of East Hampton
Suffolk County
New York

HAER No. NY-142

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NY,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Hayground Windmill

NY-142

Location: Inc. Village of East Hampton, Suffolk
County, Long Island, New York

Date of Construction: 1801 or 1809

Present Owner: Mr. William E. Simon
Sand Spring Road
New Vernon, New Jersey 07976

Significance: The Hayground Windmill is one of eleven
surviving 18th and early-19th century
wind-powered gristmills on Long Island. It
is one of three windmills with a fantail.

Historian: Robert Hefner

Transmitted by: Kevin Murphy, Historian HAER, April 1984

I. History of the Windmill

On the center post of the Hayground Windmill is incised "Built 1809", but all secondary sources state that the mill was built in 1801. The partners of the original mill company were General Abraham Rose, Benjamin Rogers, Ethan Topping and Nathan Topping Cook.¹ Nathan Topping Cook was a Bridgehampton carpenter, wheelwright and furniture maker who also did some work on local mills. His account book shows that he worked on White and Hedges' fulling mill in 1807; his work included fashioning 45 rounds and 170 cogs.² But there are no entries in the account book for work on the Hayground Windmill. Jeannette Edwards Rattray credits Samuel Schellinger, the Amagansett millwright, with building the Hayground Mill, but his extant account book for the period shows no entries to work on this windmill.³

The Hayground Windmill stood on the old triangular commons at the center of the village of Hayground, midway between Bridgehampton and Water Mill. This was the only mill in Hayground through the 19th century and serviced the village and surrounding countryside. The mill operated into the 20th century; by 1912 it was grinding just corn and feed during the summer months.⁴ In its last year of operation, 1919, the Hayground Mill was the only windmill on Long Island still running.⁵

Over more than 100 years of operation, the Hayground Windmill was owned and operated by the descendants of the original owners. The millers were Ethan Topping, Jesse Topping, George Topping and the last miller was Maltby Rose.⁶

In 1870 according to the Census of Industry, the Hayground Windmill operated for 4 months and ground 800 bushels of wheat, 400 bushels of corn and 800 bushels of oats. The Beebe Windmill in neighboring Bridgehampton operated 6 months in 1870 and ground 2700 bushels of wheat, 1700 bushels of corn and 1700 bushels or oats.⁷

After 1919 the mill was used variously as a tea room and artist's studio. In 1950 Robert Dowling purchased the windmill and moved it to his estate on the dunes in East Hampton.

II. Structure and Machinery

It is not known who built the Hayground Windmill. But it is certain that it was not Nathaniel Dominy V, which establishes the fact that another millwright was working within 10 miles of East Hampton, during Dominy's most active period as a millwright. The Hayground Windmill is very similar to Dominy's mills and also to the other south fork windmills. Features of the Hayground Windmill which are different from Dominy's windmills are: the tailpole; cross bracing at the first floor bays; single posts to support the bridgetree pivots; the adze or broad ax finish left on the structural members.

FANTAIL

When the Hayground Windmill was built, the cap was apparently turned by a tailpole. In 1918 a Mr. Rogers told Edward Buffett that he remembered helping push the tailpole around as a youth.⁸ Evidence inside the windmill supports the supposition that the fantail was installed in the mill some time after it had been built; it is likely this would have occurred from 1820-1850. A second curb and a new cap-centering system were installed with the fantail. A wider curb which projected to the outside was built on top of the original curb. This was to accomodate the cap rack. The segments of this upper curb are butted together and the joints are secured with iron straps; a method which would not have been used in 1801 or 1809. When the fantail was added a much more substantial cap-centering system was installed. Four large blocks, each 6 feet long with large

truck wheels inserted at each end, are suspended from the cap frame. The truck wheels roll against an iron band on the inside of the upper curb. A cap-centering system identical to this one is found in the Mill Hill Windmill, now at Southampton College, which was also converted from a tailpole to a fantail in the first half of the 19th century.

All the components of the fantail are identical to those of the Beebe Windmill. The fantail was in operating condition in 1950, but now only part of the fanstage remains. The starwheel assembly is on the ground, but the pinion shaft is missing.

GRAIN SYSTEM

The Hayground Windmill has both a sack hoist and a grain elevator. The sack hoist, which uses a chain, runs off a layshaft at the third floor. The elevator carries grain from a bin at the second floor to a screener at the third floor. The elevators in other mills run from the first to third floors; in the Hayground Mill the sacks of grain were likely brought to the second level by the sack hoist. An early photograph of the interior of the mill shows a long flour bolter at the first floor;⁹ this bolter and whatever other machinery may have been in the first level of the mill have been removed.

The Hayground windmill has two run of French burr stones. The undersides of the bedstones are stenciled "Manufactured and Warranted by the Columbia Iron Foundry, Duane Street..." In 1850 Nathaniel Dominy purchased a cob crusher for the Hook Mill from the Columbia Foundry in New York.¹⁰

1950 RECONSTRUCTION

The mill was considerably reconstructed after it was moved to East Hampton in 1950. Although the mill was moved in a piece, after it was placed on its new site many of the structural members were replaced. The sills and base framing of the mill are entirely new. A few stubs of original transverse beams remain to indicate that this was the method of framing the mill. Three cant posts are new and all structural members of the adjoining four bays are new.

NOTES

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(1) William Donaldson Halsey, Sketches from Local History, Bridgehampton, 1935, p. 30.

(2) Nathan Topping Cook Account Book, 1792-1822, manuscript, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

(3) J.E. Rattray, East Hampton History (Garden City, N.Y.: Country Life Press, 1953), p.538.

(4) Charles A. Jagger, "The Old Mill Hill Mill and other Old Mills," The Southampton Magazine, Summer 1912.

(5) Rex Wailes, "Windmills of Eastern Long Island," Newcomen Society Transactions, 1934-1935.

(6) W.D. Halsey, Sketches from Local History, Bridgehampton, 1935, p.30.

(7) United States Census Office, 9th Census, Census of Industry, Suffolk County, 1870.

(8) Edward P. Buffett, "Some Long Island Windmills," American Machinist, 17 October 1918, p. 727.

(9) Photograph of Hayground Windmill, East Hampton Free Library, manuscript no. CD 17.

(10) Nathaniel Dominy VII to the Columbian Foundry, 24 December 1892, manuscript, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.